

"Your Mother's Ass,"
I informed
him.

as he checked his program
I walked
off.

ROSARY

my father was a man full of
sayings:

"early to bed and early to
rise ..."

"a fool and his money ..."

"you made your bed now lie in
it ..."

"a penny saved is ..."

"do as I say, not as I have
done ..."

"if you don't succeed, suck
eggs"

there were others but I have
forgotten them.
how he would toll them off
endlessly

when he died I went to look at
him in his casket.
everybody talked about how good
he looked, "peaceful! look at him,
how peaceful! they've fixed him up
real nice!"

I just looked at him
almost expecting him to pop off
one of his sayings:

"a dead ass is better than no
ass at all ..."

or

"don't you wonder where I'm chasing
daffodils now?"

but nothing happened so I walked
off
followed by uncle
who said, "hey, Henry, let's
go get something to eat!"

"I know just the place," I said,
"follow
me"

I could almost hear him saying
from the casket:

"the way to a man's heart is
through his
stomach"

COUNSEL

I am living in hell, he told me, and I said, is that right,
Frankie? and he said, I am truly living in hell, you
would never believe it.
everything, he continued, has hardened into a repetitious
going-on toward nowhere.
is that right, Frankie? fucking-a, he said, you ever
been locked into a position where the only escape is
death?
yes, I told him.
then what do you do? he asked.
Frankie, I just wait, death is coming anyhow.
but, he told me, I can't wait.
Frankie, you'll wait.
why, he asked me, is pain the most present and constant
thing in life?
physical pain is hard to explain, Frankie, but I know what
causes most spiritual pain.
yeah? yeah? he asked.
most spiritual pain, my lad, is caused by
over-expectation.
yeah? yeah? he asked.
over-expectation, I said, try to avoid it.
do you? he asked.
yes, more and more I expect less and less,
and do you get less?
almost always, Frankie.
damn, he said, it always helps to talk to you, you've been
around the block.
I'm afraid so, Frankie.